

THE MILITANT

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Cubans lead campaign to fight cholera in Haiti

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Chicago rally slams new probe by FBI



Militant/Edith Adachi

Protest outside federal courthouse in Chicago December 6 against grand jury subpoenas of three youths who traveled to Palestine.

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—More than 100 people picketed outside Dirksen Federal Courthouse here December 6 to protest federal grand jury subpoenas against three antiwar activists. The federal government had previously issued grand jury subpoenas last September against 14 political activists in

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Washington, Seoul sustain provocative maneuvers

BY SETH GALINSKY

The South Korean military began new live-fire maritime military exercises December 6. This is the third round of provocative exercises aimed at North Korea by South Korean and U.S. forces in less than a month.

The North Korean government accused Seoul of being “hell-bent on moves to escalate the confrontation.”

The latest South Korean maneuvers are taking place at 29 locations, including 16 in the Yellow Sea between the Korean Peninsula and China. The rest of the sites are in the South Sea and the East Sea between Korea and Japan and are scheduled to last until December 12. The South Korean government warned ships to avoid the areas.

On November 23 South Korean forces based on the island of Yeonpyeong, just seven miles from the North Korean coast, exchanged artillery fire with North Korean troops. The South Korean government had been firing “test shots” in the waters around the island.

After the signing of a cease-fire in 1953 that marked the end of the Korean War, Washington drew what is known

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Crisis strains ‘unity’ of capitalist Europe

Rulers foist burden on working people



Reuters/Paul Hanna

Unemployment line in Madrid, Spain. Government recently announced plans to end benefits for long-term unemployed as official jobless figures soar over 20 percent.

BY DOUG NELSON

A financial crisis is cascading throughout the weakest economies of the eurozone, the 16 countries bonded by a common currency. The propertied rulers of Europe have thus far responded by foisting massive government debt on the most indebted countries in idle hope of stemming a broader crisis whose consequences will not be confined to the continent.

Meanwhile, it has become increasingly obvious that a united capitalist Europe is a myth, as the unfolding world depression brings to the fore conflicting interests among competing powers. And economic disparities

within the eurozone and broader European Union are widening, despite the old promise that the union would even these out. The capitalists and their governments in Europe remain unified on one front alone—their intention to make working people bear the brunt of the crisis.

For years the EU provided countries with lower levels of productivity and economic development such as Greece, Ireland, Spain, and Portugal with cheaper credit than their economies would otherwise allow. This resulted in faster development of industry, agriculture, and construction. It

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Grinding joblessness confronts millions in the United States

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

It’s been almost a year and a half since the government announced that one of the deepest recessions since the 1930s had ended—but millions of workers wouldn’t know it.

The official unemployment rate in November rose to 9.8 percent, up from 9.6 percent the previous month, according to the U.S. Labor Department. Nearly 42 percent of those on the unemployment rolls have been out of work for more than six months.

This is the 19th consecutive month the jobless rate has been above 9 percent, the longest extent since World War II. Federal officials project no change over the next year.

Economists have tended to characterize this as a “jobless” recovery. Among the signs for optimism they point to is a rise in sales by U.S. auto companies by double-digit percentages in November, a 10 percent jump in pending home sales in October, and

retail sales heading into the holidays. But for the 17.6 million workers unemployed and 9 million others forced into part-time hours, there’s no recovery in sight.

“Data out over the last few weeks tells us it is getting better,” writes

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Black rights activists fight 40-year frame-up

BY MARY DICKINSON
AND JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Nebraska—Nebraskans for Justice has recently launched a campaign to pressure the U.S Justice Department to open up Cointelpro files that could shed light on the frame up of Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa.

Poindexter, 65, and we Langa (formerly David Rice), 61, were leaders of the Black Panther chapter in Omaha, Nebraska, in the 1960s and became targets of the Omaha police and the FBI under the U.S. government’s Cointelpro (Counterintelligence) programs. Both men have been imprisoned for 40 years, serving life sentences at the Nebraska State Penitentiary on frame-up charges of killing an Omaha policeman.

Poindexter and we Langa were active in protests demanding justice for the killings and harassment of Blacks by Omaha cops.

On Aug. 17, 1970, police were sent to a house in North Omaha after an anonymous caller told a 911 dispatcher that he could hear a woman screaming. A suitcase bomb exploded after the cops entered the house, killing one police officer and injuring seven others.

Within hours Omaha cops targeted the Black community; dozens were picked up and questioned. “Houses were searched, some without legal warrants,” according to Lucas Tyler, Omaha Black rights veteran.

At Poindexter’s and we Langa’s 1971 trial they were found guilty of the bombing on testimony by Duane Peak, a 15-year-old Black youth police said placed the 911 call. At a preliminary hearing

Peak testified Poindexter and we Langa had nothing to do with the cop getting killed. After a brief recess, however, Peak returned to the witness stand and changed his entire story to accuse Poindexter and we Langa of the bombing.

Nan Graf, a retired college professor, has been an active supporter of Poindexter and we Langa since 1974. Graf had been asked by Nebraskans for Justice to collect documents and memos through the Freedom of Information Act pertaining to the systematic spying and harassment of African American activists in Nebraska by the cops and FBI.

Graf said, “In one memo dated October 10, 1970, six months before Poindexter’s and we Langa’s trial, the FBI said in writing that the tape of the 911 emergency tape should be withheld from the defense attorneys because it would be prejudicial to the prosecution’s case.”

Nebraskans for Justice has printed postcards of “Truth and Reconciliation” addressed to U.S. attorney general Eric Holder. Since September hundreds have been signed and mailed to his office.

Amnesty International has adopted the case and has called for the release of Poindexter and we Langa. The British Broadcasting Company produced a documentary, and actor Danny Glover has supported the fight.

For information on how to back the fight to free Poindexter and we Langa go to www.n2pp.info or contact Mary Dickinson at mdickin@lps.org.

Mary Dickinson is a Lincoln High School teacher and vice president of Nebraskans for Justice.

‘R bellion Teamster’ at Montreal book fair



Militant/Luc Paquin

MONTREAL—*R bellion Teamster*, the French-language edition of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, was featured at the Pathfinder booth at the November 17–22 Salon du livre de Montreal, an annual cultural event here. Six copies were sold. *Teamster Rebellion* is the first of a four-part series dealing with the 1934 strikes in Minneapolis, paving the way for the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations as a fighting social movement.

For the first time, the French-language edition of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes was also available to Salon participants, who purchased 19 copies—16 in French, 2 in English, and 1 in Spanish. Two copies were sold of the Spanish-language edition of Fidel Castro’s new book *La victoria estrat gica*. Over the course of the six days 47 Pathfinder books were sold.

—JOHN STEELE

Rally slams new FBI probe

Continued from front page
the Midwest related to their antiwar activities.

Stan Smith, the father of Sarah Smith, one of those recently subpoenaed who could not be at the protest herself, read his daughter’s statement. In it she described being contacted December 3 by an FBI agent who asked to talk to her about a trip she took last summer to Israel and the West Bank. Smith, who is Jewish, made the trip with two Palestinian American friends.

“You would think that Jews and Palestinians going together to visit Israel and Palestine is something that the U.S. government would encourage,” Smith’s statement said. “Instead we are now being ordered by the FBI to go before a grand jury for going on that trip.”

Attorney Jim Fennerty, who represents some of the antiwar activists who

were earlier ordered to appear before the grand jury, told WBEZ radio that the U.S. government is “widening the scope of this investigation. They’re trying to squeeze people . . . who do solidarity work around Palestine.” All 14 who received subpoenas in September, after the FBI raided many of their homes in Chicago, and Minneapolis have refused to testify in front of the grand jury.

Matt Brandon, secretary-treasurer of Service Employees International Union Local 73, told the December 6 rally here, “When people can’t get together and protest without being threatened by arrest or raid or subpoena it’s a sad state of affairs.” He pledged that the union “will not stand by and watch as people are targeted, and people are dragged from their homes, and people’s belongings are taken and they are searched and seized.”

THE MILITANT

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The ‘Militant’ provides coverage on the fight by Black farmers against discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It describes the conditions facing all working farmers and the importance of their alliance with the working class. Don’t miss a single issue.



Militant/Nick Gruenberg

Black farmers and supporters march in Washington, D.C., September 23 to protest discrimination.

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New Zealand military expands for new wars

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—In its first military review in 13 years, the New Zealand government released a “Defence White Paper” that projects a significant reshaping of the New Zealand Defence Forces (NZDF). It anticipates more wars ahead; an ongoing commitment of New Zealand troops currently deployed in Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, and other countries; and a stepped-up emphasis on the need to be an “active, engaged and stalwart partner of the United States.”

The rulers here have for many years been rebuilding their links with U.S. imperialism after their formal alliance was ended by Washington in 1985. That came after the Labour government banned visits to New Zealand ports by U.S., British, and other nuclear-armed or propelled naval vessels, a move coming out of the protest movement here that opposed the imperialist assault on Vietnam.

In a shift from the previous government’s efforts to disguise military operations under the banner of “peace-keeping,” aid, and diplomacy, the White Paper more clearly spells out the combat role of the New Zealand military in defending the interests of New Zealand imperialism in the Pacific and around the world.

It signals the government’s intention to strengthen military collaboration with other traditional allies like the United Kingdom, Canada, and, in particular, Australia. To assist this collaboration and prepare for future combat, the White Paper projects beefing up the Defence Forces’ front-line capabilities to allow more troops to be deployed overseas for longer. The Special Forces will be enlarged, air and sea transport capabilities im-

proved, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capacity stepped up. Naval combat capacities will also be upgraded, in particular to ensure the continued operation of New Zealand’s newest frigates, a key part of the NZDF’s contribution to imperialist operations, such as patrolling the Arab-Persian Gulf.

Uniformed personnel in nonoperational posts—up to 1,400 people—will be freed up for deployment and replaced by civilian employees. Military bases will be reviewed and combined.

The NZDF comprises 9,673 regular troops, 2,314 reservists, and 2,590 civilians, a “small but heavily deployed force,” according to the paper. In the future more effort must be placed, it says, on recruiting personnel from “non-traditional sources, including from ethnic groups, which are under-represented in the NZDF.”

The paper stresses the role of the New Zealand military in backing the rulers’ interests in the Pacific, including against their imperialist rivals. In particular it projects continuing



New Zealand Defence Force

New Zealand soldier patrols in village district of Dili, Timor-Leste, in April 2007.

NZDF’s intervention in Timor-Leste and in the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, where the NZDF has been since 2003. It also projects continuing the 70-year presence of the NZDF in the Middle East and participating in United Nations-led “peacekeeping” operations in Africa.

U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton recently visited New Zealand and signed a new agreement for closer military collaboration between the two countries. Clinton described her

trip as “part of a committed, concerted effort to restore America’s rightful place as an engaged Pacific nation.”

In a press conference November 5, Clinton praised New Zealand’s participation in the U.S.-led intervention in Afghanistan. Since 2003, the New Zealand government has maintained a 140-strong Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamiyan Province, Afghanistan, and in August resumed deployment of Special Air Service troops to the country.

Myanmar junta tightens up on free speech

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—One month after elections in Myanmar, described by opposition forces as rigged, the chief of the military junta imposed curbs on freedom of speech for members of the newly elected parliament.

Members of parliament enjoy free speech “unless their speeches endanger national security, the unity of the country or violate the constitution,” reported the *Washington Post*. A two-year jail sentence awaits anyone who organizes a protest on parliament grounds.

The population of Myanmar (formerly Burma) is more than 50 million. At least one-third of Myanmar’s population lives below the poverty line, according to UN figures. The last mass protests against military rule occurred in 2007, when working people took to the streets against rises in fuel prices.

The November 7 elections were openly designed to reinforce the junta’s rule by covering it with a parliamentary facade. Military appointees will fill one-quarter of the seats in each of the three newly “elected” legislative bodies.

Following the election, the junta released prominent opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi after seven years of house arrest. Suu Kyi heads the Na-

tional League for Democracy (NLD), which comfortably won the last elections held in 1990. The generals blocked that government from meeting.

According to official results, the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) won nearly 80 percent of the seats up for vote. The party is headed by Prime Minister Thein Sein and other officers who only recently “swapped military fatigues for civilian clothes,” as Reuters put it.

USDP leaders are associated with moves to privatize state economic holdings. This policy differentiates them from the National Unity Party (NUP), which with 63 seats came in a distant second. The NUP was identified with a heavily centralized economy that for decades provided entry to the capitalist class for top military officers.

Opposition forces split over whether to participate in the elections. Suu Kyi’s NLD called for a boycott. Defecting NLD leaders participated in the vote under the banner of the National Democratic Force, winning 16 seats. In total, parties not directly tied to the military gained 9 percent of the total seats. Several were based on non-Burman nationalities, who make up between a quarter and a half of the population.

In interviews and speeches since

her release, Suu Kyi, who has received backing from Washington and the other imperialist powers, has called for freeing the other 2,200 political prisoners. She has also said she supports talks with the regime for “national reconciliation” and is open to lifting economic sanctions.

While millions live close to starvation, the junta has opened up the economy to foreign investments in the country’s natural resources. Gas and oil reserves, along with timber and precious stones, have drawn investment from companies in Thailand, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, and India. Trade sanctions against Myanmar prevent most U.S. and European corporations from joining in the plunder, but oil companies are granted exceptions.

China’s economic weight and growing influence in Southeast Asia, including growing investments in Myanmar and close military and political ties to the regime, are prompting concerns in Washington. Writing in *Asia Times* online in March of this year, Stanley Weiss of Business Executives for National Security said, “The Obama administration has sought to begin a new conversation with Myanmar, conducting the highest-level talks with the generals in more than a decade.”

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linsky, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 307 W. 36th St., 10th floor (north elevators). Tel.: (212) 736-2540.

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Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution
1983–87

by Thomas Sankara

“Our revolution in Burkina Faso draws on the totality of man’s experiences since the first breath of humanity. We wish to be the heirs of all the revolutions of the world, of all the liberation struggles of the peoples of the Third World. We draw the lessons of the American revolution. The French revolution taught us the rights of man. The great October revolution brought victory to the proletariat and made possible the realization of the Paris Commune’s dreams of justice.” —**Thomas Sankara, October 1984**

Available from PathfinderPress.com



Steelworkers in Illinois fight Honeywell lockout

BY BETSY FARLEY

METROPOLIS, Illinois—"They brought in armed guards who told us we had 30 minutes to get our stuff and get out," said Todd Evans, a six-year operator locked out by Honeywell at the uranium processing plant here. The 230 locked-out workers process uranium hexafluoride, a stage in the process of enriching uranium for nuclear power and weapons production.

Members of United Steelworkers Local 7-669 voted down a union-busting contract proposal last June and offered to continue working under the current contract. But Honeywell refused the offer, demanding the elimination of seniority and retiree medical benefits, along with pension cuts and a wage reduction of 10 percent over three years.

"The company was well prepared. They had 188 scabs in the plant for 30 days shadowing us try to learn our jobs," Evans said. "But safety has always been our first concern, and there's no way anyone can learn to operate this plant safely in that amount of time."

Uranium hexafluoride (UF₆) is chemically toxic and radioactive. The Metropolis facility is the only one in North America that converts uranium ore to UF₆ without shipping an intermediary product to another location. On September 5, one day after the "replacement" workers started up core production at the facility, a hydrogen explosion rocked the plant. While company officials denied it, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission later confirmed there was indeed a hydrogen blast.

The Metropolis facility was previously shut down after a release of UF₆ gas in December 2003 hospitalized four and led to evacuations of dozens of local residents.

Directly in front of the Honeywell plant the union has erected a field of crosses, 42 in memory of their members who have died from cancer and 27 smaller crosses to represent workers who have cancer but are surviving.

The scabs are employed by the

Shaw Group. In 2009 a subsidiary of this outfit was forced to pay \$6.2 million in government fines for forcing its workers not to report safety violations at nuclear facilities in Alabama and Tennessee, according to the *Huffington Post*.

"It's ironic that Honeywell CEO David Cote was named to sit on President Obama's fiscal responsibility commission while we're fighting for our lives and our community against his union-busting here," Evans remarked.

The locked-out workers maintain 24-hour picket lines at the plant gates, even though an injunction has limited the number of workers who can be on the line at any one time. They have two solid, well-heated picket houses donated by local auto dealerships.

"The solidarity and support has been amazing," said Marcalene Holt, a 15-year operator in the plant. Signs supporting the workers can be seen in front of many houses and small businesses in this town of 6,500. "We're fighting not just for ourselves, but for everyone," explained Mark Moore.



Militant/John Hawkins

Locked-out workers picket Honeywell uranium plant in Metropolis, Illinois, December 3.

Hundreds of workers from Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee turned out for a march and rally in August to support the locked-out workers. In September a delegation of workers from a sister USW local in Canada spent four days on the picket line in Metropolis.

"Other workers have been locked out in this area," Holt said. "We're the

first ones to stand up, that's why we're doing this, and we're not going to give up."

Contributions are welcome. Make checks payable to USW Local 7-669, PO Box 601, Metropolis, IL 62960. E-mail: admin@usw7-669.com

John Hawkins contributed to this article.

Australia immigrants protest incarceration

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia—In mid-November some 20 asylum-seekers being held at the Christmas Island immigration detention center stitched their lips together to protest delays in the processing of their cases. Their eight-day action was supported by a hunger strike of more than 200 fellow prisoners.

Protests also erupted at the Villawood detention center in Sydney November 17 following the suicide there of an Iraqi asylum seeker, Ahmed Al Akabi. Five detainees—three Iranians, an Iraqi, and a Kurd—staged a rooftop protest over the suicide and delays in their own cases, with 160 others joining a hunger strike in support. Al Akabi had been held for a year, as have the rooftop protesters.

In September a similar protest took place at the Villawood center after a Fijian man, Josefa Rauluni, threw himself off the roof of one of the buildings just hours before he was due to be deported. Rauluni had been working in Australia as a fruit picker and had been arrested in August after overstaying his visa. Chinese asylum seekers also staged a rooftop protest at Villawood in September, and Iranian and Kurdish asylum seekers held a 12-day hunger strike.

At the end of November there were a total of 5,746 asylum-seekers in detention in Australia, including 2,786 on Christmas Island. The detention center there, in the Indian Ocean some 200 miles south of Indonesia, was originally built to house 400. In face of rising tensions in the detention prisons, which are run by private contractor Serco, immigration officials have reportedly held off informing detainees when their applications for asylum had been rejected, in some cases for months. The most recent protests erupted following a High Court ruling November 11 that asylum seekers held in "offshore" detention can have their cases reviewed in Australia's courts for the first time since 2001.

The John Howard government enacted legislation in 2001 that was sup-

ported by the Labor Party at the time, and maintained by the Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard Labor governments since, to "excise" thousands of islands from Australia's "migration zone." The express aim was to deny all asylum seekers arriving by boat access to Australia's court system to challenge rejected appeals for refugee status.

In a case taken to the High Court by the Refugee and Immigration Legal

Centre, two Sri Lankan Tamils due to be deported after the Immigration Department rejected their cases were given the right to appeal.

Meanwhile, with the Christmas Island facility full to overflowing, the Gillard government is continuing to press the East Timorese government to build a detention center on its territory for refugees seeking asylum in Australia.

Millions unemployed in U.S.

Continued from front page

John Mauldin in his Frontline financial newsletter. "The economy is growing, so why does it feel like a recession? Maybe because the data is still in recession territory."

Over the past 60 years, after other recessions ended, unemployment levels declined. This is not the case today as the uncertainty about the future possibilities for profit-making are tempering any rise in capitalist production.

The last time unemployment rates were so high was during the 1981-83 recession, when the official rate reached 10.8 percent. Coming out of that recession unemployment steadily declined over three years to 7 percent and by the end of the decade to about 5 percent. While the pace of decline slowed considerably over previous recessions, it did go down.

One major difference between the 1980s and today is that there were a lot more manufacturing jobs then. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, there were 20 million manufacturing jobs in the late 1970s and 11.6 million today.

The bosses aim to produce more from fewer workers through speedup and attacks on workplace safety. Only about 75 percent of factory capacity is being utilized today. At the same time workplace "productivity" has risen by 2.5 percent or higher for the past six quarters. "We're producing almost as much as we did before the recession,

with 7.5 million less people," Lakshman Achuthan, managing director of Economic Cycle Research Institute, told CNNMoney. While manufacturing jobs are declining—there are less today than any time since 1950—the concentration of employment in service industries and the government has increased significantly.

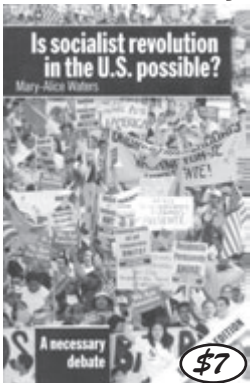
But at least 300,000 new jobs, including 150,000 for population growth, have to be created each month for the unemployment rate to decline, wrote CNNMoney. In November, employers added 39,000 jobs to their payrolls, according to the Labor Department report.

Factories cut 13,000 jobs last month and 5,000 were laid off in construction. Retail employment declined by 28,000. Government jobs dropped by 11,000, a figure expected to rise over the coming months as state and city governments eliminate more jobs to reduce budget deficits. In New York City, for example, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has announced plans to cut more than 10,000 jobs.

Meanwhile, federal programs providing extended unemployment benefits anywhere from 34 to 73 weeks above the 26 weeks provided by states expired November 30. Without Congress renewing these programs more than 2 million will lose what for many is their only income by the end of December and another million by January 31.

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters



In two talks, presented as part of a wide-ranging debate at the 2007 and 2008 Venezuela International Book Fairs, Mary-Alice Waters explains why a socialist revolution in the United States is possible. Revolutionary struggles by working people are inevitable. They will be initiated not by the toilers, but will be forced upon us by the crisis-driven assaults by the propertied classes on our conditions of life and labor. In growing solidarity and the emergence of a fighting vanguard of working people, the outlines of these coming class battles can be seen.

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ON THE PICKET LINE

Cable workers in Australia strike to protect conditions, job rights

SYDNEY, Australia—About 200 workers from three unions have been on strike against Prysmian Cables & Systems at Liverpool in southwest Sydney for six weeks, workers on the picket line told the *Militant* December 4.

The Prysmian strikers' Web site says this is the result of "savage restructuring of jobs and conditions being imposed throughout workplaces in Australia in the fallout from the global financial crisis."

Prysmian produces high-tech cables for energy and telecommunications systems. The company has cried poor as it seeks to attack working conditions and wages, including removing overtime rates for shift and weekend work. Prysmian also wants to introduce temporary workers at the minimum pay rate and cap severance pay at a maximum of 52 weeks' pay.

"All we want is for the company to leave our conditions alone," said Fea Moana, originally from Samoa, who has worked at the plant for 17 years. No union member has crossed the picket line. Production workers, covered by the National Union of Workers, are picketing alongside members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Electrical Trades Union.

—Ron Poulsen

Landlord locks out workers at building complex in New York

BROOKLYN, New York—Building porters and maintenance workers are fighting back against a November 29 lockout by the Flatbush Gardens apartment complex here. The more than 70 workers, who clean and maintain the 59-building complex, are members of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ. They say the complex owner, Renaissance Equity Holdings, aims to cut wages by 30 percent and require workers to pay to maintain health insurance.

"We even offered to freeze wages at their current level for a year and the company refused," said Vernon Rampersad, a porter. "The porters used to cover two buildings each; now we cover three."

In a statement broadcast on News 12 Brooklyn, the company said it would use temporary workers until Local 32BJ members ratify "the best and final proposal presented to them on September 1."

Lucien Clarke, 46, is the only electrician at the complex. "They say take it or leave it," he said. "But the prices go up and they want to cut us down. So

we can't take it. I'm not just fighting for myself; I'm fighting for my children's future."

Many of the 32BJ members live in the complex. "The Flatbush Gardens Tenants Association is 100 percent behind the union," said Rudolph Chase, the association's second vice president. "We joined the rally called by the union last week. This isn't just an attack on the union, but an attack on the tenants. We're all working people."

—Mike Fitzsimmons

Montreal: unionists demonstrate for locked-out newspaper workers

MONTREAL—Several thousand unionists and their supporters marched December 4 to the *Journal de Montreal's* offices here in solidarity with 253 workers locked-out by the newspaper since January 2009 for refusing to accept major concessions. Leading the demonstration, locked out workers carried big red letters spelling out "Boycott the *Journal de Montreal*" in French.

In October the workers rejected by 89 percent the latest offer from the paper's



Militant/Beverly Bernardo

March by unionists in Montreal December 4 to support locked-out newspaper workers. Banner reads, "The power of solidarity."

owner that would have permanently laid off 201 of them. The workers are members of the STIJM (union of news workers at the *Journal de Montreal*), which is affiliated to the CSN, one of Quebec's labor federations.

The big majority of unionists who

came out were in CSN-affiliated unions—from construction, meatpacking, and other sectors of the federation. But the FTQ and the CSQ, two other labor federations in Quebec, also organized contingents for the march.

—Beverly Bernardo

How capitalist politicians go after Medicare

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The U.S. Congress and the Barack Obama administration are continuing their assault on Medicare, just not in one big blow. More like death from a thousand cuts.

Most workers and farmers in the United States depend on Medicare for health care following retirement. Won as a by-product of the fight for unions and the Black rights battles of the 1950s and '60s, it provides basic medical care to anyone over the age of 65 and those who are disabled.

Because of how it was won, working people consider Medicare their right. The capitalists are reluctant to go after it with a frontal assault. Rather, they chip away on numerous fronts, one of them by reducing payments to doctors who treat Medicare patients.

The House of Representatives voted November 29 to put off for another month a scheduled 23 percent drop in fees for doctors treating patients on Medicare. Ten times in the last eight years, and four times this year, Con-

gress has voted not to make the cut.

But doctors are already dropping thousands who depend on Medicare in favor of those who pay higher fees, either through private insurance plans or out of pocket. Highline Medical Group, with 35 doctors at eight clinics in the Seattle area, told 6,000 Medicare patients they must switch to a different Medicare plan by January 1 because of the anticipated fee drop.

A survey by the Washington State Medical Association found that 22 percent of doctors would stop taking new Medicare patients if the cut goes through.

The *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that more than half of the \$938 billion the new health-care reform law will supposedly devote to coverage for low-income people will come from cuts to Medicare—\$455 billion over 10 years.

One of the targets of these cuts is Medicare Advantage, a private insurance program that contracts with the federal government. The advantage program is used by 25 percent of

Medicare patients, in part because it includes drug prescription coverage, which basic Medicare does not.

When Secure Horizons HMO of Santa Cruz, California, stops offering Medicare Advantage in 2011, 2,000 patients have only one other Medicare option in the county, Healthy Heart. Their monthly premiums will rise from \$85 to \$181 and copayments for doctor visits will also increase.

Another means of gradually undermining Medicare is through government sleight of hand in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Based on the government's current index, Social Security recipients were denied a cost-of-living increase this year and for 2011 because inflation supposedly held steady. Not only does this CPI not count rises in food or fuel prices, it ignores the fact that older people spend twice as much on health care as those who are younger.

Now Obama's deficit commission is proposing a new CPI scheme for determining Social Security that will downplay inflation even more.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 13, 1985

The apartheid regime was dealt a blow December 1 when 10,000 unionists rallied to hail the successful completion of the founding gathering of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). It has an estimated 500,000 members.

The unionists' growing confidence was indicated when newly elected COSATU President Elijah Barayi told cops near the rally: "I want to tell you that you will not arrest one soul at this meeting today. If you have come to provoke trouble, then you will get what you are asking for." The federation plans to campaign for abolition of pass laws used to bar millions of Blacks from the 87 percent of the country reserved for whites except when they are working for a white boss.



December 19, 1960

The Algerian struggle for freedom from imperialist France has taken a tremendous step forward. For the first time in the six-year war, the masses moved into the streets of Algiers in a demonstration of such power as to completely alter the relation of forces between the heroic guerrilla bands and the American-backed French army.

The demonstration came as an unexpected consequence of a tour by Gen. de Gaulle.

Thousands of young fascists marched into the streets Dec. 9, shouting "Keep Algeria French." The Algerian community came into action at this point. Thousands poured out of their ghettos in Algiers.



December 21, 1935

From the bombastic scheming and prattling that accompanied the introduction of the Works Progress Administration, the naïve observer would have been led to believe that the problem of unemployment in the United States was about to be liquidated.

Between Sept. 1 and Sept. 15, 1935, the abolition of the Federal Transient Bureau began and was completed. Relief to roving workers in search of employment was wiped out to the last penny.

On the heels of this move, Federal relief terminated in 26 states by Nov. 15. The remaining states received their final unemployment "dole."

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

by Jack Barnes

Building the kind of party working people need to prepare for coming class battles through which they will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all society.

A handbook for those seeking the road to overturn the exploitative system of capitalism.

PathfinderPress.com

Commission calls for working-class ‘sacrifice’

BY ANGEL LARISCY

“Rival lawmakers join to rally for deficit plan,” read the December 4 *Washington Post* headline. Eleven of 18 members of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform have given their support to the commission’s December 1 report titled “The Moment of Truth.” The bipartisan commission was appointed 10 months ago by President Barack Obama to make proposals to reduce the federal deficit.

From the beginning, Obama has urged the panel to find “common ground” in proposing massive cuts in social programs. While the commission needed 14 votes to recommend its program to Congress, the 11 votes in favor is considered a success by the Obama administration toward putting together a bipartisan plan.

In its preamble the commission report says, “The problem is real. The solution will be painful. There is no easy way out. Everything must be on the table.”

The idea of working-class “sacrifice” was also the White House theme in announcing a two-year wage freeze for all federal workers last week. The commission’s proposals go even further, including a three-year freeze on federal workers’ pay, along with cutting 200,000 jobs through attrition; gradually raising the retirement age to receive full Social Security retirement benefits; a 15 cents per gallon increase in the federal gasoline tax; and beginning to tax employer-provided health insurance. The tax rate for the wealthiest individuals would decline from 35 percent to 29 percent.

For the 2011 fiscal year, the U.S. deficit—the difference between what the government takes in revenue and what it spends—is projected to be \$1.26 trillion. A great percentage of the federal debt pays for Washington’s wars. In addition to increasing military spending annually, there are mounting payments on interest and principal to the wealthy bondholders on debt from past wars. These payments always take priority.

Democrats and Republicans alike explain that all Americans, whether worker, farmer or banker, have a stake in lowering the deficit. “Our debt crisis is a threat not just to our way of life but to our national survival,” said commis-

sion member Michael Crapo, a Republican senator from Idaho.

Democratic senator Richard Durbin of Illinois said, “I’m going to say something now that is heretical on the left and they won’t like me for saying it, but what you have suggested in increasing the Social Security retirement age is acceptable to me.”

A number of the proposed cuts recommended by the commission are steps many state and city governments have already been implementing to deal with budget crises. These measures fall hardest on working people.

Illinois has not made annual payments to its pension funds for years; many other state governments are following suit this year. New York State has held off payments to vendors and local governments and shorted workers’ pension funds to try to balance the budget. New Jersey governor Christopher Christie has not paid \$3.1 billion due to that state’s pension plan. A number of states delayed paying tax refunds in



AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli

Health-care workers and supporters rally in Los Angeles May 14 against state budget cuts. Many of proposed cuts by President Obama’s appointed deficit commission are similar to measures that have already been enacted by many state and local governments.

the spring. At the same time, layoffs of public workers are rising nationwide.

Further assaults are being prepared under the banner of deficit reduction, as workers continue to face record unemployment, cuts in benefits and health care, and foreclosure and lack

of affordable rents with no relief in site. Washington is attempting to lower expectations among working people of what they have a right to while pushing down their standard of living. “Sacrifice” by working people is now the new mantra of this bipartisan crusade.

‘The rulers must radically lower expectations’

Below is an excerpt from “Their Transformation and Ours,” the Socialist Workers Party Resolution from 2005. The article is included in New International no. 12 along with “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun” by Jack Barnes. Readers of the Militant will find this material useful in countering the arguments of the bipartisan campaign against Social Security and other aspects of workers’ social wage. Copyright © 2005 by New International. Reprinted by permission.

Only in face of a social crisis triggered by depression and war has finance capital in the United States been able to mobilize the kind of patriotic appeals for “national unity” and “equality of sacrifice” that can convince broad sections of the population, at least for a time, to accept sweeping cuts in their living standards. It will take such circumstances once again for the rulers to mobilize, on a national political plane, a campaign that attempts to roll back wages and conditions further and to substantially reduce the social wage. Tens of millions in the working class and middle layers have come over

decades to consider Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, workers’ compensation, and other benefits to be rights. Most depend on these benefits for survival after retirement, or after an injury or illness that has left them unable to work.

The progress thus far by individual employers in increasing the rate of exploitation through assaults on wages, hours, and conditions falls far short of what the capitalists must accomplish. The ruling class needs to slash payouts for Social Security pensions and other components of the social wage. It must shift more of the costs of education, public transportation, care of the young and old, and other government-funded services onto individuals and their families, making them more dependent on the church and charities.

Above all, the rulers must radically lower expectations bred over the last three decades by gains wrested from their hands during the 1960s and early 1970s that transformed Social Security into a modest but real inflation-protected pension to live on and medical coverage to fall back on.

When Social Security pensions were first won by workers in the course of labor battles in the mid-1930s, the monthly payments were at best a small supplement to individual family support and church and county charity. Average life expectancy in the United States at that time was six years below the retirement eligibility age set at 65. From the mid-1960s through the early 1970s, as a by-product of the mass proletarian struggle for Black rights, Social Security was significantly extended and strengthened. Benefits were indexed to inflation for the first time; Medicare was established for all those receiving Social Security; and Medicaid became available for those below a certain income level, and for many with physical disabilities, regardless of age.

Today life expectancy is twelve years—and rising—above the age at which most people become eligible

for full Social Security benefits. The bosses are scrambling to devise ways to reappropriate more and more of even this small portion of the wealth workers create through our labor—a portion the capitalists, contrary to the assurances of the reformists, never intended to be settled for all time. Over several decades, however, as both jobs and increases in real cash money earnings have become more insecure, millions have come to believe they need a retirement income and emergency medical protection that are less vulnerable to risk, not more so. Thus, despite its need to slash these entitlements, the capitalist class recoils from the kind of social and political fight they know they’ll be picking if they attempt anything more than take-back “reforms” around the edges.

In 1996 the Clinton administration took the initial slice out of the social wage, out of these “rights” of the working class, leading Congress to end federally funded Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which had been established as part of Social Security in 1935—the end of “welfare as we know it,” in Clinton’s cold and contemptuous phrase.

For more than a quarter century, both Republican and Democratic party politicians have escalated demagogic cries that Social Security is “going broke,” implying that blame falls on growing numbers of “greedy geezers” who save too little, retire too early, and live too long. As far back as 1983, Democratic and Republican politicians joined together to raise the Social Security eligibility age, currently heading to 67, and hike the payroll tax—the most regressive and anti-working-class of all federal, state, or local taxes, aside from lotteries. What’s more, despite the myth that these payroll tax funds are “put aside,” are isolated from the flow of general tax revenues, they are in fact used by Washington year in and year out to fight its wars and prop up the dollar, one of the unspoken consequences of which is to subsidize massively inflated bourgeois consumption.

New International no. 12 “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun”

by Jack Barnes

Today’s accelerating global capitalist slump accompanies a continuation of the most far-reaching shift in Washington’s military policy and organization since the U.S. buildup toward World War II. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point for imperialism, and chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

New International no. 13 “Our Politics Start with the World”

by Jack Barnes

The huge economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries are produced and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. For vanguard workers to build parties able to lead a successful revolutionary struggle for power in our own countries, our activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap.



Also includes:

- ❖ **Their Transformation and Ours**
Socialist Workers Party Draft Resolution
- ❖ **Crisis, Boom, and Revolution**
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Cubans lead campaign to fight cholera in Haiti

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Cuban government has more centers to treat cholera in Haiti than any other government or non-governmental organization there. Now it is greatly expanding its medical mission.

An additional 300 doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel are joining the 965 members of the Cuban Medical Brigade, bringing the total Cuban contingent in Haiti to more than 1,200. Cuba is also expanding its 37 medical centers to 49 and adding 1,100 hospital beds.

Two hundred members of the contingent are graduates of Cuba's Latin American Medical School (ELAM), which trains students from all over the world, including Africa and the United States, free of charge. Hundreds of Haitians have also been trained at the school; many of them are now collaborating with the Cuban medical mission.

As of December 2, an estimated 84,000 Haitians had been infected with cholera; nearly 1,900 have died in the six weeks since the first case was confirmed. The countryside has been much harder hit than the capital city Port-au-Prince.

The group Doctors Without Borders has 30 cholera centers, more than a third of them in Port-au-Prince, with doctors from several European countries. Cuba operates some centers jointly with Doctors Without Borders, the United Nations, and other aid groups.

Most of the Cuban-run centers operate in rural areas, often in the most isolated and difficult to reach parts of the country. The mortality rate for cholera victims treated by the Cuban brigade is less than 1 percent; for the rest of the private, Haitian government, and international-run centers it is about 3 percent.

One Cuban brigade is in L'Ester village, in the Artibonite region where the cholera outbreak began. When health workers there learned that dozens of people in the even more isolated Plateau hamlet were severely ill, they quickly sent nine people, in-

cluding five doctors and two nurses, to set up a treatment center. Four of the doctors, from Uruguay, Paraguay, Nicaragua, and Haiti, are ELAM graduates.

In a letter to family and friends, published in the on-line CubaDebate, Emiliano Mariscal, describes how the mission functions and why the death rate at the Cuban-run centers is so low. He is an Argentine doctor who graduated from ELAM and is volunteering with the Cuban mission in Haiti.

According to Mariscal, the Cuban brigade has trained 15,000 Haitians on how to deal with the cholera outbreak. In addition, he explains, the Cuban doctors have been in Haiti "without interruption for more than 12 years, generating empathy and confidence among the population that does not exist with other forms of co-operation."

Mariscal also touches on the powerful example of having a revolutionary workers government in power in Cuba. "The experience of practically 50 years of internationalist action," he writes, has inspired young people from around the world with the "conception of solidarity" practiced by Cuba.

Cuba's aid to the Haitian people stands in sharp contrast to the inaction of the U.S. government. A No-

Call to widen fight to free Cuban Five



Amauris Betancourt/Juventud Rebelde

More than 300 delegates from 56 countries attended the Sixth International Colloquium for the Freedom of the Cuban Five in Holguín, Cuba, November 18–22. The five—Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, and René González—have been in jail in the United States for more than 12 years, convicted on frame-up charges. The five had been monitoring the activities of right-wing Cuban exile groups in Florida that have a history of carrying out violent attacks on Cuba with the complicity of the U.S. government.

The conference called for increasing actions to get out the facts on the case to a wider audience, including international days of solidarity planned for June 8, September 12, and October 6. Conference participants joined a November 20 march of 10,000 people (above) in Holguín to demand the five be freed.

—SETH GALINSKY

ember 15 article on a U.S. State Department Web site said that the U.S. embassy was working to "enhance their surveillance system" in Haiti for reporting cholera cases. In addition Washington is "helping to sup-

port seven cholera treatment centers in Port-au-Prince," the article said. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control will soon be conducting a survey to determine how residents of that city "obtain and store water."

Internationalism in Africa: 'A duty fulfilled'

Cuba's proletarian internationalist role in supporting national liberation struggles is nowhere more pronounced than in Africa. In the following excerpt, three leaders of the Cuban Revolution, generals who served as volunteers helping repel a South African invasion of Angola, talk about Cuba's internationalist missions in that country and elsewhere in Africa. They explain the significance of Cuba's role in helping the Angolans to defeat South African troops at the decisive battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988. The excerpt is from the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Gener-*

als in the Cuban Revolution, a collection of interviews with Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong. Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, conducted the interview. Copyright © 2005 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



CHUI: Throughout our history there were many internationalists who fought for our freedom. We have been true to their legacy . . . We lent assistance to the Congo, for example, and to the Republic of Guinea when Sékou Touré was president. At various times we also aided Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Somalia, Ethiopia, Algeria, Syria, Yemen, Oman, Sierra Leone, São Tomé and Príncipe, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, and other nations in Africa and the Middle East.

In terms of the Americas, there's Nicaragua, Grenada, and Guyana, among others, including Venezuela today.

We should stress that this aid has been of every type. It includes medical, construction, educational, and cultural assistance as well as military missions.

SÍO WONG: Our people hold socialist and internationalist ideas. That's how we've been educated. What other country can provide four or five thousand doctors for voluntary internationalist work when asked for help? But not only doctors. Our soldiers. The 375,000 Cuban combatants who served in Angola between 1975 and 1991 were all volunteers. That may not be well known, but it's a fact. . . .

WATERS: Nelson Mandela called the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1987–88 "a turning point in the history of Africa." Yet outside Cuba—and much of Afri-

ca—this battle is largely unknown.

SÍO WONG: In late 1987 the enemy almost completely surrounded a group of Cuban and Angolan troops at Cuito Cuanavale. And the decisive battle took place there. The battle lasted more than four months, and in March 1988 the South African army was defeated. That defeat marked the beginning of the end. . . . And their defeat had a whole series of consequences—including the independence of Namibia and the release of Mandela after twenty-seven years in prison.

CHUI: It "broke the back of the South African army," to use Fidel's words. . . .

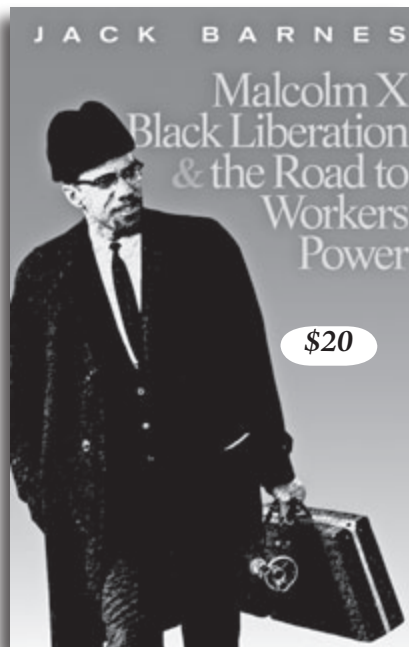
The case of Angola merits special attention. Our troops remained there fighting together with the Angolan people for more than fifteen years. Not only did we help defeat the South African army, but we also helped bring about the elimination of apartheid and the independence of Namibia. From our efforts in Africa, the Cubans brought back nothing material for Cuba. Only our wounded and dead, and the satisfaction of a duty fulfilled. . . .

WATERS: What was the impact on Cuba itself? Not everyone agreed with expending such resources, with staying the course for so many years. How did the anti-imperialist struggle in Africa strengthen the Cuban Revolution?

CHOY: Well, it really strengthened us from an ideological standpoint. All of us who went had studied slavery, the exploitation of man by man, the exploitation of the countries in southern Africa. We had studied the evils that colonialism had wrought and was still creating. But we'd merely read about

Continued on page 9

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes



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Washington’s underestimation of Cuban Revolution

Below is an excerpt from October 1962: The ‘Missile’ Crisis As Seen from Cuba, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for December. Following the defeat of the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion of Cuba in April 1961, Washington implemented new efforts to destroy the revolution. Toward this end the Kennedy administration initiated Operation Mongoose, described below. The U.S. rulers’ course pushed the world to the edge of nuclear war in October 1962. Steps taken by Cuba’s revolutionary government to defend the country’s newly won sovereignty and achievements of the unfolding socialist revolution there blocked U.S. plans for a military assault. U.S. imperialism’s hostile acts against the Cuban Revolution continue to this day. Copyright © 2002 by Tomás Diez Acosta and Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY TOMAS DIEZ ACOSTA

As the Cuban people undertook huge efforts to develop their country despite the campaign of subversion, new plans for aggression were being drawn up in the United States. A debate was under way in Washington over the most effective method of directing, applying, and controlling the many resources devoted to over-



Raúl Corrales

Peasants receive land deeds under 1959 agrarian reform law in Cuba. Vast sugar plantations and cattle ranches, majority of them U.S.-owned, were expropriated. U.S. rulers’ Operation Mongoose included plan “to disable Cuban sugar workers during harvest” with chemical weapons.

throwing the Cuban revolutionary government.

In view of ongoing blunders in the anti-Cuba plans carried out by different departments and agencies, top echelons of the Kennedy administration began looking in late October 1961 for new methods to eliminate the prevailing “disorganization and lack of coordination.” Just as in their earlier analysis of the Bay of Pigs operation, failures were ascribed to operational problems. Once again Washington underestimated the capacity of the Cuban people and their revolutionary leadership to successfully confront the challenges that such a hostile policy posed for their country.

U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy proposed to President John F. Kennedy the establishment of an operational command to direct the various plans of action in a unified, coordinated, and organized fashion and merge them into a “single plan.” In practice, this meant the preparation of a new covert operation, not merely by the CIA but by the entire U.S. government. The president asked Assistant Special Counsel Richard N. Goodwin for his opinion. Goodwin, who also headed the Interagency Task Force, replied in a memorandum, “The beauty of such an operation over the next few months is that we cannot lose. If the best hap-

pens we will unseat Castro. If not, then at least we will emerge with a stronger underground, better propaganda and a far clearer idea of the dimensions of the problems which affect us.”

Operation Mongoose takes shape

At a White House meeting on November 3, 1961, Kennedy authorized the development of a new program, much more sinister than its predecessors, designed to destroy the Cuban Revolution. The project was code-named Operation Mongoose. As a first step, several documents were prepared laying out the government’s existing action plans and its options against Cuba. . . .

On November 20, 1961, President Kennedy called the incoming CIA director, John A. McCone, to inform him that a new program of action against Cuba was being studied. In a memorandum summarizing Kennedy’s call, McCone noted that the proposal “would embody a variety of covert operations, propaganda, all possible actions that would create dissensions within Cuba and would discredit the Castro regime, and political action with members of the OAS in support of the action.” In addition, McCone recorded that the president told him that Brig. Gen. Edward Lansdale, an expert on guerrilla and antisubversive operations, would

be in charge of designing the project, under the direct supervision of the attorney general. . . .

The program included a variety of political, diplomatic, economic, psychological, propaganda, and espionage actions, different acts of terrorism and sabotage, as well as encouragement and logistical support to armed counterrevolutionary bands. In short, the operation was aimed at provoking a “revolt” of the Cuban people, which once begun would lay the basis for direct military intervention by the armed forces of the United States and its Latin American allies. The document asserted:

“The revolt requires a strongly motivated political action movement established within Cuba, to generate the revolt, to give it direction towards the object, and to capitalize on the climactic moment. The political actions will be assisted by economic warfare to induce failure of the Communist regime to supply Cuba’s economic needs, psychological operations to turn the peoples’ resentment increasingly against the regime, and military-type groups to give the popular movement an action arm for sabotage and armed resistance in support of political objectives.”

General Lansdale’s mentality in drawing up the project was shown in a memorandum to members of the Operation Mongoose working group, in which he emphasized: “It is our job to put the American genius to work on this project, quickly and effectively.” The kind of genius the chief of operations had in mind was shown when he later added task thirty-three, consisting of “a plan to disable Cuban sugar workers during harvest by means of chemical weapons.”

A day later, in a meeting chaired by Robert Kennedy, all those present were called on to show absolute, resolute determination not to fail in carrying out their tasks. Kennedy stated that solving “the Cuban problem” was at that moment “the top priority in the United States Government—all else is secondary—no time, money, effort, or manpower is to be spared.” He stressed that the president of the United States had told him that “the final chapter on Cuba has not been written” and that “it’s got to be done and will be done.”

December

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Fight for a socialist world

“The economy is growing, so why does it feel like a recession?” one capitalist investor recently wrote when looking at current U.S. unemployment figures. For millions of workers in the United States and around the world the answer is simple—the capitalist system is in crisis and conditions of life continue to deteriorate for the vast majority.

Official unemployment is above 9 percent in the United States for the 19th consecutive month. It is more than 20 percent in Spain. In Ireland, the jobless rate has doubled over the past two years to 13.6 percent. “Official” means many more are actually jobless.

Austerity measures announced by capitalist governments to protect the banks and capitalist profits will soon put tens of thousands more public workers out on the street. At the same time, many of the programs workers have fought for and count on for relief as the economy falters are being savagely cut.

Capitalist politicians don’t know what to do about the crisis of their system. They live on hope that the economy will turn around and they won’t have to face working-class struggles challenging capitalist rule.

We are living through a period in which depres-

sion conditions will extend for years to come, despite ups and downs. We are living through a period when the capitalist rulers will use whatever powers of their state they deem necessary to defend their system. We are entering a period that will be marked by decades of long, hard struggles, which will ultimately decide which class will rule.

As the introduction to *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes explains, the wars and economic devastation being wrought by capitalism must be ended through a revolutionary struggle for power by working people. As was done by the Cuban toilers in their revolution in 1959.

“Only the conquest, and exercise, of state power by the working class and expropriation of finance capital can lay the foundations for a world based not on exploitation, violence, racial discrimination, class-based pecking orders, and dog-eat-dog competition, but on solidarity among working people that encourages the creativity and recognition of the worth of every individual, regardless of sex, national origin, or skin color.

“A socialist world.”

Provocative maneuvers against N. Korea

Continued from front page

as the Northern Limit Line. As part of the line, Washington claimed that parts of the Yellow Sea (also known as the East China Sea) as little as three miles off the North Korean coast were part of South Korean territory. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the North never agreed to this division line or to the permanent division of Korea. Most governments in the world assert their sovereignty for 12 miles from their coasts.

The latest South Korean exercises overlap with one week of joint U.S.-Japanese maneuvers, which began December 3. Possibly the largest-ever joint military maneuvers between these countries, they involve 400 aircraft, 60 warships, more than 40,000 Japanese and U.S. soldiers, and South Korean observers. Among the ships is the aircraft carrier USS *George Washington*. After the artillery exchange at Yeonpyeong Island the aircraft carrier sailed though the Yellow Sea in a show of force backing the South Korean military before rounding the peninsula to join the U.S.-Japanese exercises.

A high-ranking U.S. military officer told the *Washington Post* that the aircraft carrier’s route through the Yellow Sea was aimed not just at North Korea, but at China, which has previously objected to U.S. military exercises so close to the Chinese mainland. “Call it a message,” he said, “but we believe in the freedom of navigation.”

While flaunting Washington’s military might in the Yellow Sea, the Barack Obama administration has also accused Beijing of “enabling” North Korea to start a uranium-enrichment program,

which the White House claims is provocative.

In what the *New York Times* called “a sign of mounting tension between the United States and China over North Korea,” Obama telephoned Chinese president Hu Jintao December 5 to demand that Beijing back U.S. pressure on Pyongyang.

Beijing instead has called for the renewal of six-party talks, with government representatives from the United States, Japan, South Korea, Russia, China, and North Korea, to calm down tensions in the region.

After meeting in Washington, D.C., December 6 with foreign ministers from Japan and South Korea, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton rejected the Chinese proposal and demanded that North Korea abandon its nuclear program.

While Washington and Seoul are intensifying actions that could lead to further military confrontations, many in South Korea are opposed. A recent poll, for example, showed that 43 percent of junior and senior high school students believe that “pointless” South Korean military exercises caused the artillery exchange at Yeonpyeong Island, and that the exchange was begun by the South Korean military.



Cuba’s internationalism in Africa

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it in books. In my own case—and I’m sure the same thing happened to other Cubans—I got there and could see with my own eyes what the colonial system really was. A complete differentiation between the whites, the Europeans—in this case the Portuguese—and the native population. We saw how these countries were exploited. We saw a country that was so rich, yet Angolans were living in what we saw as subhuman conditions. Because their country’s riches were being stolen. Because the colonialists had not preserved the forests or the land.

Sometimes we’d be traveling in vehicles, and people walking along the road would run when

they heard us coming. We learned why. Under Portuguese rule, if the native inhabitants didn’t get out of the way, the colonialists would sometimes run them over. This went on for generations. So whenever they heard a vehicle coming, they’d run. And not just off to the shoulder of the road either. They ran because they’d been mistreated like this for years, for centuries.

The main lesson I learned from this mission was to fully appreciate colonialism’s cruelty toward the native population, and the naked theft of their natural resources. To see a country with great natural wealth like Angola, yet with a population facing needs of the most basic type!

Europe economy

Continued from front page

also accelerated the growth of a massive financial bubble, particularly in real estate. Today they are shackled with unpayable debt burdens, while having lost any trade advantage that a separate weaker currency could provide. Unemployment in Ireland has more than tripled over the last decade.

Like the Greek government earlier this year, the government of Ireland recently agreed to take out massive “bailout” loans from a 750 billion euro fund set up earlier this year by the European Union and International Monetary Fund (1 euro=US\$1.32). Together, the two governments borrowed some 200 billion euros to shore up banking systems on the verge of collapse.

Banks in the strongest economies of Europe—Germany, United Kingdom, and France—have a major stake in the move, themselves concerned about losing hundreds of billions of euros in outstanding Greek and Irish debt marked as assets on their balance sheets. The stronger economies have also become dependent on the union for export trade as their home markets shrink under the capitalist crisis of overproduction.

As a condition for the new loans, the governments of Greece and Ireland moved to impose deep-going austerity measures on working people, cutting wages, reducing retirement, gutting social programs, and raising taxes. The moves are designed to assure creditors that the large sovereign debts assumed by the governments are worth something.

As long as they keep the euro, Athens and Dublin can’t depreciate their currencies in an effort to stimulate investment and exports—a move that would carry its own ruinous consequences for working people and the economy. Locked into declining gross domestic product, rising interest rates, and mounting debt, the government austerity measures not only immediately degrade the lives of workers, but themselves further depress the two economies, meaning that the assault on the working class has just begun.

Mounting debt in Portugal, Spain

A similar financial crisis appears unavoidable in Portugal and Spain, the latter with an economy nearly three times the size of Ireland and Greece combined. The two governments need to come up with some 700 billion euros in the next few years to cover their deficits and bond payments.

The government of Spain, where unemployment has topped 20 percent, announced cuts to wages, pensions, and health care in May as it sought to assure the owners of its mounting sovereign debt.

“Spain isn’t going to have to tap any EU fund,” Socialist prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero sought to convince investors in a December 2 interview with CNBC. A day earlier he announced plans to sell off the country’s airport authority and lottery to pay down debt and pledged to end unemployment compensation for the long-term jobless. The Cabinet decided December 3 to raise 780 billion euros through increased tobacco taxes.

Meanwhile, European government officials are wrangling over how to approach the inevitable.

Already the European Central Bank itself has begun buying sovereign debt from the governments of Ireland and Portugal, according to Reuters, but the amounts are not public. At a December 6 meeting of European finance ministers in Brussels, a number of government representatives, backed by the IMF, pressed to increase bailout measures to shore up the most troubled economies. Other proposals include substantially increasing the 750 billion euro loan fund in anticipation of the coming debt crises and creating eurozone sovereign bonds, issued collectively by the 16 countries that use the euro.

German chancellor Angela Merkel is leading the opposition to these proposals. Merkel, who heads the government of Europe’s strongest economy, argues for facing the destruction of debt soon rather than later. At issue is essentially how far to kick the can down the road with bailout loans before the inevitable debt “restructuring” takes place. This, however, will not only hit the pocketbooks of a substantial layer of capitalists—the mere suggestion of it has already begun to shake confidence and assumptions that lubricate the capitalist machine.

Either way, the capitalist crisis across Europe is pushing the working class to the wall and will force, out of necessity, working-class resistance.